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The Musikalisches Opfer was Bach's
Frederick the Great.

BELIUS: Second Symphony in
Opus 43; played by Boston Sym-
phony Orchestra, direction Serge Kou-
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ELIUS: Second Symphony, first two of
his thirty-seventh and thirty-eighth
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The attempt
to play a
quartet in
this way is
a failure.

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SCHUMANN'S Quintet for Piano and
Strings, which is one of his most nota-
ble compositions, ranks as one of the
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cham's also.

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breathe: as soon as one beautiful
idea is grasped, it is succeeded by
another which drives the first from
the mind."

MOZART: *Miserere* Duet, and *Te Deum*,
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in her first concert, sing-
ing three of Mozart's rarely
heard songs, and aria. *Viva*
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Metastasio's
Munich patron.

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THE admirable songs of Erich Wolf,
little known, and have
the recognition that dis-
cians consider
in Vienna.

VERDI: *Zurberflur*, Simon Bockwurm,
sung by Alexander
Ormandy.

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singer.

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SCHUMANN: *Manfred* - Overture,
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MOZART: String Quartet in C Major,
K. 465; played by Budapest String Quar-
tet. Victor set M285, three discs, price
\$6.50.

THIS is the last of six quartets that
Mozart dedicated to his friend Haydn
in 1785 with the long and eulogistic in-
scription which reads in part -
"to my friend and dear friend
Joseph Haydn."

VERDI: *Orfeo*, Love Duet, 1 side,
by Claudia Martin and Francesco
Cavallotti, with orchestra conducted by Moli-
schi. Columbia disc No. 9108A, price \$1.50.

IN *Orfeo*, Italian musical genius ac-
companied by his vocal difficulties, but unfor-
tunately his vocal difficulties are so great that
the singers are few who can bring in full
filament its inherent possibilities.
must be born - but then
and Beethoven's.

MEYERHOFER: *Die Lorelei*, Symphonic
Major (Italian), Opus 90; played
by the Boston Symphony Orchestra,
direction Serge Koussevitzky. Victor
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QUSEVITZKY has long
been known for his brilliant expository
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GENSHWIN: *Rhapsody in Blue*, played
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BACH: *Jesus, Joy of Man's Desiring*, (arr.
by J. S. Bach), played by the Temple Church
London, organist and conductor
Temple Church, London,
Hall, organist and conductor
obligato in the Bach pl.

SEPTMBER, 1943 • VOL. X, No. 1

WAGNER: *Schelling*: *Tristan* and
Prelude, Piano solo, played by
Ignace Jan Paderewski. One Victor disc,
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Edited by PETER HUGH REED

THIS famous chorale
Bach's sacred Cantata,
Mund und That and
fourth Sunday in
Advent.

MONTEVERDE: *Lagrime d'Amante* and
Sepolcro dell'Amato, (Tears of a Lover
at the Tomb of his Beloved), Madrigal,
Sestina; sung by Cantori Bolognesi, di-
rection Marino Cremonesi. Columbia
Set No. 218, three discs, price \$4.50.

THE importance of this work was dis-
cussed last month in our article on it,
which has also been reprinted as the book
let with the set. It remains, therefore, to
let with the recording, the performance
of the music.

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MUSIC IN INDUSTRY

Doron K. Antrim

TEMPO AND CHARACTER IN BEETHOVEN'S MUSIC — Part II

Rudolf Kolisch

CZECHOSLOVAK COMPOSERS AND MUSICIANS IN AMERICA

Jan Lowenbach

BOHUSLAV MARTINU

Milos Safranek

CHARLES T. GRIFFES AS I REMEMBER HIM

Marion Bauer

THE ROAD TO MAJOR

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QUARTERLY RECORD-LIST

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1944

September, 1943 • VOL. X, No. 1

Their Made Record History

Editorial Notes

As we looked back recently over the nine volumes we have issued to date, the memory of better times in the record industry created a state of nostalgia from which we found it rather hard to release ourselves. There are many readers who have traversed the long distance with us; faithful friends who have seen progress made and vicissitudes coped with. Returning to our first year of publishing, we were amazed at the number of fine items issued then which still remain unimpeached. And so we decided to take an excursion through our initial volume and recall some of the releases in the first twelve issues which have made record history for one reason or another.

The title of those notes is not quite complete. They might be subtitled *Or They Should Have, or Or Did They?* We are not endeavoring to be facetious, but the fact remains that a lot of the things we valued then and have valued during the long years have gone the way of all flesh. Single discs, regarded by some of us a record gems, have been removed from the catalogues. Record buyers spend most of their money on the recognized masterpieces; the lesser masterpieces, of which there are quite a few, and the unrecognized masterpieces, of which there are a great many, are purchased only by

the knowing ones. And it goes without saying that the knowing ones are in the minority. But this is not an article dealing entirely with masterpieces. It deals with recordings that members of our staff of critics found worthwhile during the first year of publication, and that we believe, have proved their worth through the years. Many readers are going to find one thing or another missing, and many are going to shake their heads in disagreement. How justified they will be may be proved only by re-investigation. If we had access to the sales figures of the record companies, this article might be a different story.

Our opinions of a decade ago are considerably altered today. What seemed justifiable on the strength of good reproduction for its period may not be so today. Interpretative estimations of ten years ago are no longer measured with the same yardstick. A wider range of artistic representation has nullified the usefulness of many recordings formerly appreciated. Further, many listeners have discovered that some interpretative values—enjoyed in the concert hall—are not sustained on records. Highly personalized performances which in public are often acclaimed become irksome at home. Showmanship, for its own sake has no

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enduring value in a record. The severest test is living with a thing. Divorces from once admired artistic values are as legitimate, essential and understandable as separations from human beings sometimes are. Loyalty is a much misrepresented as well as misunderstood quality.

How many of us remember buying that Maxfield Parrish, in a sentimental moment, living with it until we wondered what was the matter with us or it? Some people go on living with a picture, even when it no longer appeals. Others get rid of things that have served their usefulness. That Parrish picture, for example, we one day discarded for a more worthy and enduring piece of art. Perhaps the inquiries of friends embarrassed us at first; they saw the picture upon occasion and thought differently of its artistic values. What a relief it was to have that friend come in who said: "Well, I'm glad that's gone; this new picture is worth a dozen of it." And, having got rid of an old recording for a new one, or having got rid of some sentimental effusion for something of sturdier worth, we likewise found some friends' comments embarrassing while others were more comforting.

It hardly behooves any of us to assume a benevolent attitude or a servile neutrality toward contemporary recordings any more than toward yesterday's. What the ultimate significance of a recording will be few, if any of us, can say. It is to be judged from one or both of two aspects: the pleasure derived from its artistic values (either musical or interpretative), and its value from a historical standpoint. Few record buyers are concerned with the latter, however. Yet it should be observed that historical significance plays a definite part in music appreciation.

Different Viewpoints

A final word on criticism—what may seem legitimate and constructive estimation to some may seem preposterous to others. The record companies, interested primarily in sales figures, have never been too friendly toward the critical fraternity, particularly to those members of it who have the reader's interests primarily at heart. The companies are inclined to re-

gard critical opinions that are not worded to help the sales of records as all wrong, and not infrequently they voice their displeasure at such opinions.

We remember that when the Bach-Stokowski album containing the conductor's transcription of the *Chaconne* (Victor set 243) was issued, we stated that few of his arrangements of Bach were worth perpetuation on records. Although no reader protested against our review, one record official voiced his displeasure strongly, making us wonder at the power of advertising. The fact that other critics were in agreement with us did not help our case; apparently we were expected to endorse a set featured in advertising. That we did not pursue this course at any time, most of our readers know.

Paul Paray

Well do we recall the advent of Beethoven's *Pastoral Symphony*, as played by Paul Paray and the Colonne Concerts Orchestra (Columbia set 201). It was issued at the same time as the Bach album just mentioned. Paray, perhaps the foremost French conductor of his time, was then unknown to most American listeners. No advance publicity regarding his status was forthcoming. To many of us, however, his performance of the *Pastoral* proved a revelation. "His feeling for the many subtle nuances, his understanding of instrumental balance, his stressing of the correct rhythmic lines," said our reviewer, William Kozlenko, "makes his reading pertinent and interesting. Here is feeling for tempi and dynamics that would, we are sure, please Toscanini and Weingartner themselves." It was Paray's recording of the *Pastoral* that opened our eyes to the greatness of that work; previously we had found it dull. The fact that Paray's performance has been superseded by Toscanini's superb reading need not disturb us; for, as we have said, anyone owning the Paray set should not feel compelled to part with it—it is not only a fine performance but still a good recording.

The appearance of several Mozart concertos in the early days of our editing is recalled with particularly pleasurable feelings; feelings that have long been sustained and proved as enduring. Among

these recordings were young Menuhin's performances of the *D major*, K. 271a (Victor set 231) and of the so-called *Adelaide Concerto* (Victor set 246). To be sure, the authenticity of both has been questioned; yet, as Philip Miller said in his review of the first, "one feels it is genuine Mozart... it has the right sparkle and life... there is a reminiscence of the *Don Giovanni Minuet* in the second movement... in the last movement we have an amusing anticipation of the American tune, *Dixie!* It is all very grateful and brilliant for the violinist, and Menuhin brings out all there is in it. This young musician is doing more, we believe, to raise the standards of the violin playing than anyone else in our time. The old type of virtuosity for its own sake seems to be passing..." The *Adelaide Concerto* is another story; it was arranged by a modern Frenchman from an old manuscript. The sprightly charm of this work sustains our interest, however, particularly in Menuhin's splendid performance. The similarity of the initial theme in the slow movement to Beethoven's popular *Minuet in G* still raises conjectures.

Mozart At His Best

Edwin Fischer's thoughtful performance of Mozart's great *D minor Concerto*, K. 466 (Victor set 223) has always been a valued reading. Our reviewer (W.K.) stated that Fischer played the work reverently: "his manner of execution is virile, yet he retains all the poetic qualities of Mozart's lyrical singing style... We must remember that the piano in Mozart's time was not yet as fully developed as it is today. Pianists are, as a rule, prone to forget this important fact, and the result is that they achieve dynamic balances out of proportion with the pattern of the composition and its time. Evidently, Fischer is cognizant of this detail, for he apparently strives to frame his interpretation within the body of the work itself". It is, perhaps, this fact that makes Fischer's, as well as Walter's, performances of this work more acceptable to the true Mozartean than Iturbi's; the loudness of the recording in the latter's set does not make up for its missing ar-

tistic qualities.

How many recall the appearance of Sir Henry J. Wood's fine performance of Haydn's delightful *Farewell Symphony* (Columbia set 205)? Sir Henry, well known for his "pops" concerts in England, has been too often unjustly disparaged. Compton Packenham said of this work: "There is no message to puzzle over, no philosophy to digest, no idiom to master... which is exactly why Sir Henry is so suited to playing this symphony. The characteristic suavity that is achieved in the London studios is, as can be expected, in evidence here. Whereas it may not be the way to get the best results tomorrow, it does not tax the present means of reproduction." We might pause and ponder this final sentence. For the recording suffices today. Haydn's little joke at the end remains an effect that is as charming as it is unusual, and the symphony remains one of his most delightful creations.

Paray Again

Paray's performance of d'Indy's *Symphony on a French Mountain Air* (Columbia set 211) still remains unchallenged for many. To be sure, the new version by Monteux and the San Francisco Symphony has greater tonal nuance by virtue of its more modern recording, but Paray's performance owns a polish and a precision that leave one with a wholesome respect for his splendid musical attainments. The few recordings he has made are justly valued by musicians.

Adrian Boult's poised reading of Shumann's *Manfred Overture* (Victor discs 11713/14) has not yet been displaced. And if the qualities of Schumann's music do not draw us back to them as often as do the qualities of other works, this composition still commands respect in an occasional hearing for its dramatic power and loftiness. Undeniably, Byron is outdated today, but Schumann's music does more for Byron than does Tchaikovsky's long-winded and frequently inflated composition on the same subject.

Koussevitzky's performance of Strauss' *Also Spake Zarathustra* (Victor set 257) was regarded by many, and still is, as the "most realistic reproduction of a mo-

dern symphony orchestra ever heard". The instrumental representation and balance have been as much of a problem of reproduction as a joy to the ear. The English protested against the "blatancy" of the recording, but Americans acclaimed it. Koussevitzky's virtuoso treatment of this score is far more compelling than Stock's more complacent reading. It is from the interpretative and recording aspects rather than from the musical, however, that this set qualifies as having made record history.

When the Hindemith *Trio for Strings No. 2* (1933) (Columbia set 209) was released we acclaimed it as an important modern-music release. Compactly written, the work is strong and vital in content. Its interest grows on one. W.K. remarked that Hindemith "borrowed much from Bach, though the use to which he puts the borrowed elements in another matter... in his music is firmness of statement, discipline of style, rigorous working out of thematic material... a spirited and dynamic work". Time has substantiated rather than altered these views.

Fischer's "Bach"

In a month (June, 1935) that saw the issuance of Coppola's valued performance of the Chausson *Symphony*; Harris' overture, *When Johnny Comes Marching Home*; Beecham's artistic delineation of Rossini's overture to *La Gazza Ladra*; Tansman's *Triptyque*, in a disgracefully bad reproduction of the St. Louis Symphony; and the Pro Arte's unexcelled reading of Franck's *Quartet*—the most valued release was the *Ricercare* from Bach's *Musical Offering* in the fine performance of Edwin Fischer and his Chamber Orchestra (Victor disc 8660). It is foolish to say that this recording has outlived its usefulness, despite the subsequent issuance of the complete version of the *Musikalisches Opfer*. The disc made record history, and is still highly valued by musicians and music lovers.

Although Claudio Monteverde has long been a prime favorite of ours, we have never got around to a general article on his recorded music. We hope to do one some day. In July, 1935, we wrote an article on his *Lagrima d'Amante al Sepolcro d'Amata*, which Columbia used

later as a booklet. The recording (Columbia set 218) of this noble and moving madrigal sestina was released at our instigation. Although recorded around 1929, at a time when much diffusion was alleged to exist in choral singing on records, the importance of the work nonetheless justified its inclusion in Columbia's domestic catalogue. Later developments in machine reproduction have proved that what appeared diffusion in reproduction in 1928 and even in 1935 can today be better clarified. On a good modern set this recording reproduces satisfactorily. Few people who have heard this music reproduced adequately have failed to be moved by its beauty and nobility. It has been a source of perpetual enjoyment for many.

A Memento of Paderewski

Remembered by admirers of Paderewski will be his performance of Ernest Schelling's arrangement of Wagner's *Prelude to Tristan and Isolde* (Victor disc 7324). Although music so seething with passion, so definitely orchestral in texture seems unsuited to the medium of the piano, there is much to be said for Schelling's transcription, although the Lisztian cadenza at the climax proves a pretentious intrusion. But there remains in the glorious sweep of Paderewski's interpretation, as P.M. said in reviewing this disc, virtuosity which sustains our interest. Moreover, the recording was made several years prior to its release, at a time when Paderewski's interpretative powers were still at their height. And so this disc made record history as a valued souvenir of the artistry of the great Pole. Neither Paderewski nor his friend and pupil Schelling is with us now.

Alexander Kipnis' recording of *In diesen heiligen Hallen* from Mozart's *Der Zauberflöte* and *Il lacerto spirito* from Verdi's *Simon Boccanegra* (Victor 8684) has stood the test of time. Who has sung the noble Mozart aria better on records? Said A.P.D. of the Verdi air: "Kipnis' voice is tender in the grief-laden passages, and steady and proud in the more defiant lines of text... luckily the undistorted recording does superb justice to the magnificent singer and his accom-

panying artists".

Majorie Lawrence's opulently sung recording of the *Final Scene* from Strauss' *Salomé* (Victor disc 8682/83) has not been displaced. The recording also remains satisfactory as regards tone and dynamics. Many singers tend to overstress Salomé's eroticism, but Miss Lawrence avoids this temptation; she wisely leaves much to the listener's imagination. These are notable Straussian pages notably conveyed in reproduction. Furthermore, the recording is a souvenir of a valued artist at her best.

When the Schnabel-Pro Arte performance of Schumann's masterful *Quintet in E flat* (Victor set 267) was released in August 1935, we hailed the performance. Time does not diminish such musical values as the artists brought to their performance. It was observed that Schnabel achieved sensitivity without sentimental stress, highly appreciable artistry in a romantic work. The refinement of that performance is what we miss most in the more recent version by Sanroma and the Primrose Quartet, where the romantic spirit of the music seems to have evaded the players. That the former set has disappeared from the catalogue in favor of the latter is to be rued.

A Lieder Gem

One wonders how many admirers of fine lieder singing missed the recording by Florence Easton of two songs—*Ich bin eine Harfe* and *Alle Dinge haben Sprache*—by Erich Wolf (Victor 1712). When this little disc appeared our reviewer found Easton the ideal singer to record these songs. Erich Wolf, born in Vienna in 1874, was accompanist to Julia Culp for many years. His death in New York in 1913 cut short a highly promising career as a lieder composer.

Well do we remember the issuance of Mozart's *Quintet in C major*, K. 515 (Victor set 270), played by the Pro Artes and Alfred Hobday. Through the years this set has been greatly cherished, nor has the continued acclaim of the more passionate *G minor Quintet* weakened our feeling that the *C major* is as great if not greater. There is a poetic profundity in this music which is most impelling; when

heard it temporarily effaces all memories of the other work.

In September, 1935, there was released a little disc (Victor 4286) containing the lovely chorale, *Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring* from Bach's sacred *Cantata No. 147* and a selection, *Lord God of Heaven and Earth*, from Spohr's oratorio *The Last Judgment*, sung by the Choir of the Temple Church, London. The arrangement of the accompaniment of the Bach excerpt for piano and oboe may be regarded as anachronistic, but the exquisite oboe playing of Leon Goossens and the freshness and beauty of the boy choristers' voices has lent this recording distinction. There is a recording of this chorale (in the original version) in the *Columbia History of Music*, Vol. 2, where the tempo is not so quick. The oboe in it is also played by Goossens. But I am in agreement with Mr. Goossens, who told me that he preferred the tempo of the Temple Choir disc since it results in a finer legato line for his instrument. This is a disc that belongs in everyone's library. The Spohr selection is worth knowing.

Gershwin's "Rhapsody"

Gershwinians criticized the Sanroma-Fiedler performance of the *Rhapsody in Blue* (Victor set 517) when it was issued in 1935 as lacking in "authentic flavor". I must confess I have never been able to apprehend the so-called "authentic flavor". Van Norman, an avowed Gershwinian himself, greeted the performance in 1935 as a grand one, with "electrifying playing of the piano part by Sanroma". Time and public opinion have seemingly backed him up. Certainly, no other performance of this highly controversial American work has equalled or even approached the Sanroma-Fiedler one, and we can only repeat what we asserted then—"the recording is magnificent in its depth and brilliance".

How many listeners remember the albums of music issued by the American Society of Ancient Instruments, directed by Ben Strad? Unquestionably, Koussevitzky's recent performance of Carl Philip Emanuel Bach's *Concerto* (or *Suite*) in *D major*, in the well-devised Steinberg arrangement (Victor set 559), has

replaced the Stad version (Victor set 271), yet many of us were grateful, for the latter, as P.M. noted, when it first appeared. The fine musicianship evidenced in the Stad ensemble has made their recordings appreciable through the years. Moreover, the intimate and unpretentious quality of the old instruments often offers a type of musical respite which one can encounter through no other source.

The original Roth Quartet, was highly valued by record buyers in 1935. Its performance of Mozart's *Quartet in A major*, K. 464 (Columbia set 222) still remains unassailed. As Philip Miller said, "perhaps because of its gentleness the work requires a better-than-average performance", which it received at the hands of the Roths. Then there was ensemble's excellent performance of Haydn's irresistible *Quartet in F minor*, *Opus 20, No. 5* (Columbia set 228). Both of these sets represent the artistry of the old Roth Quartet as its best.

November, 1935, brought us Koussevitzky's brilliant and thoughtful performance of Sibelius' *Second Symphony* (Victor set 272) and the unmatched reading by Szigeti and Beecham of Mozart's *Concerto in D major*, K. 218 (Columbia set 224). How one wishes these two sterling artists could be linked together once again in the record studio! The same month came the recording of two quartets from Beethoven's *Fidelio* (Victor disc 11826), sung by Erna Berger, Marcel Wittrisch, etc., a valued disc which has never been replaced or equalled.

December, 1935, saw the release of Weingartner's esteemed performance of the Beethoven *Ninth*; Ormandy's appreciable one of Bruckner's *Seventh Symphony*; Harty's as yet unassailed recording of Handel's *Royal Fireworks Music*; and Constant Lambert's controversial *Rio Grande*. In this same month the first two volumes of the Columbia History of Music, edited by Percy Scholes, were issued in this country. There are musical treasures in both volumes, such things as Weelkes' lovely madrigal *As Vesta Was Descending*, Purcell's *Rejoice In the Lord Alway*, Handel's *Nightingale Chorus* from *Solomon*, and the several Bach excerpts by the Bach Cantata Club, London,

yet the hulk of the material has more value for the classroom than for the general listener.

The Budapest Quartet's performance of Beethoven's *Quartet in D major, Opus 18, No. 3* (Victor set 289) remains unmatched. The technical proficiency of the Coolidges does not make up for their lack of the warmth achieved by the Budapests. And despite the fact that the balance between cello and piano was not equitable, Emanuel Feuermann's performance, with Theo Van der Pas, of Brahms' *Cello Sonata in E minor* (Columbia set 236) still remains the preferred version. And since the unfortunate demise of Feuermann, the set takes on added value, for that artist left us far too few recordings.

Ria Ginster's records of the Mozart arias *Misera dove son*, K. 369 and *Spiegarmi O Dio*, K. 418 has long been a cherished disc. Less familiar than his operatic airs, these concert arias are fine examples of Mozart's treatment of poetic texts, and Ginster sings them with admirable vocal adeptness and restraint.

The Columbia History of Music, Vols. 3 and 4, issued in January, 1936, tread more or less familiar ground. There are some treasurable piano recordings by Harold Samuel in Vol. 3 and a worthwhile recording of the first movement from Haydn's *Drum Roll Symphony*. Balakirev's tone poem *Russia* is an interesting item in Vol. 4. But again this material belongs primarily to the classroom.

A valued recording of a controversial modern work has been the Pro Arte's fine performance of Bartok's *Quartet in A minor, Opus 7* (Victor set 286), which was issued early in 1936. Perhaps some of us are no nearer to its meaning today than we were the first time we heard the score, yet many of us have grown to appreciate this strange music.

It is not surprising to find that the thoughtful serenity of Elgar, as evidenced in his *Sonata for Violin and Piano, Opus 82*, did not appeal too greatly to American musical listeners. The performance of Albert Sammons and William Murdoch (Columbia set 241) did justice to Elgar, and we still believe that the music

(Continued on page 28)



HOME RECORDING

R. V. HYNDMAN*

The average home recording hobbyist is confused by the many kinds of needles and records on the market. The writer has used four makes of discs: "Audio", "Presto", "Allied", and "Gould - Moody", and can recommend them. Among the needles, both play-back and cutters, the writer has used and can recommend these makes: "Duotone", "Presto", "Audio", and "Capps".

Certain record blanks require the cutting needle to be held at right angles to the disc, others at a ninety-five degree angle, for most effective results. Observe the manufacturer's printed instructions and follow them. The materials in the record coating require the specified angles for each make of disc.

Despite a wish to avoid giving a "plug" for one manufacturer over another, the writer must admit the following preferences: "Duotone Sapphire Cutting Needles", "Duotone Play Back Needles", both sapphire and steel; "Audio Red Label Discs" and "Capps Re-Sharpening Services." After some years as a recording engineer, the writer has settled on these as his most reliable. He has used the other makes, however, with satisfactory results.

Having selected and inserted your cutting needle, you must adjust the angle of the depth of cut. If the instruction requires a ninety-degree angle, lower the cutter until the needle rests on a blank

disc. Sight along the edges of a rectangular card held against the side of the cutting arm, noting whether the needle point is directly at right angles to the disc. A protractor for ascertaining the degree of angle is more accurate, but not essential. For home recording, if the instructions stipulate a ninety-five degree cut, the needle point must appear tilted in relation to the disc. Without a protractor, you can only estimate the amount of tilt to give. If you are off one or two degrees on this "drag" angle cut, no great harm is done. The main idea is to have the needle "drag" off the perpendicular position.

Next, lift your cutter momentarily and start your table. Then drop the cutter and cut eight or ten test grooves. Gather the thread and examine it. The general rule is that the thread should be the thickness of a human hair. Almost all recording machines have a screw on the cutting arm which allows you to regular the depth of cut. A spring between the screw and cutting head is tightened or eased as needed. In general, turning the screw clockwise lightens your cut, while turning the screw counter-clockwise deepens your cut.

It is best to test and regulate the depth of cut when you change from paper-base discs to metal or glass-base, even though these be made by the same manufacturer. Test also when changing to another make of disc or when changing cutting needles. These are variations in each instance (tex-

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ture, thickness of base and coating, length of cutting needle, etc.) which require testing.

A microscope or high power lens is of course very helpful in judging depth and width of cut. With this aid, you can disregard the "chip" and look at the grooves. As most home mechanisms cut about one hundred lines per inch, a safe ratio is 60%-40%; that is, a groove of 60% to a wall of 40%. When the grooves under the glass show that relationship, your thread will be the right thickness. Without the glass, if your thread is about the thickness of human hair, your grooves are about right. A careful observer will note that different makes and qualities of discs will cast threads varying in *texture*, some with a coarse feel and some with a silky feel. Only the *thickness* counts.

As you can err in making such fine measurements by sight and feel, you must back your estimated tests by actual recording. If you find your play back needle skidding across your disc, you will know your grooves are too lightly cut. If you hear "echo" effects of notes, words or chords, you will know the grooves are too heavily cut. Then the sound corrugations form a groove patterned against a wall so thin that the play-back needle gives the echo effect by playing first the outside of the wall and then in the groove itself *inside* the walls, both of which have a similar sound pattern.

Now the thread problem almost always causes trouble for the home recordist, with skippages and marred records. Cutting inside-out is no problem, for the thread stays almost in the groove as the cutter moves *outward* and *away* from the center and thread. Cutting outside-in, as most home machines do, creates the trouble. Some amateurs use a typewriter brush, or soft paint brush, to gather up and shove the thread toward the center. Most of them brush frantically, making a stroke every few seconds, which usually snarls the thread sooner or later.

If the brush method by hand control is used, the brush should be resting on

the disc, pointed, bristles first, at the on-rushing thread, and *held steady*, with no brushing movement. Only move the brush inside as the thread (the cut) goes toward the center. If you hold the brush steady, the thread will pass through the bristles and gather slowly around the center pin. The little rubber finger found on the inner side of some cutting mechanisms is only a poor substitute for a brush.

A still better method of catching the thread is to use a right angle brace and a draftsman's brush, trimmed to the size desired. The brace is mounted across the table from the cutter, the brush allowed to rest on the rotating disc, with the tip of the brush pointing just slightly back of the center pin. This simple chip-chaser is almost foolproof, and is used even in commercial studios that have no suction arrangements.

One suggestion that may save you trouble is to cut blank grooves both before and after a recording, about four blank grooves at the start of the record and about ten blank grooves after the recording is done. Those at the beginning will serve to take up the scratching caused by sliding a needle onto the disc. It is better that this scratching come in the blank grooves than that it be a noisy background for the grooves containing sound. At the end of a disc, blank grooves allow time for the player to hear the disc, then rise and pick up the play-back needle before that needle reaches the end grooves and slides back across the disc. So many people bring home recorded discs to the writer's studios in a badly scratched condition, due solely to their failure to allow extra blank grooves at each end of the record. Often, these discs are irreplaceable—family keepsakes and mementos. In their scratched condition, often they are not able to be reproduced.

For best results, select with care your discs and your needles, both cutter and play-back; test for proper depth of cut, and watch your thread.

(To be concluded)





A SURVEY OF RECORDED OPERA ARIAS

PETER HUGH REED

PART 8

Continuing the survey of the French opera composers of the 19th century, let us turn our attention to Saint-Saëns and some of his contemporaries. Charles Camille Saint-Saëns (1835-1921) wrote a number of operas, but only one—his *Samson et Dalila*—seems to have achieved lasting success. It can be said of Saint-Saëns, as well as of the others under discussion in this article, that he contributed something to the history of French opera, although nothing of really great value. A sense of the dramatic and a gift for melody, both requisite and admirable qualities, were his chief attributes.

Samson et Dalila is a curious anomaly, since it is more of a dramatic oratorio than an opera, and has been presented with equal success in both ways. It was regarded as so Wagnerian and modern in its time that it had to wait many years before the Paris Opera would produce it. The work was first performed at Weimar in 1877; it was not heard in France until 1890. It is curious that no other com-

poser has written an opera around this story. Dalila is the type of role one would have expected Massenet to have pounced upon. She suggests music of a dramatic fervor and intensity which Saint-Saëns did not realize. Perhaps a humorous plot could be devised around the lady; we are not told whether she was a good cook, but this might provide an interesting point of departure in the old legend.

The most ideal Dalila of this century, in my estimation, was Jeanne Gerville-Réache. The sensuous beauty of her voice, her ability to retain the richness of its timbre in the chest register or in her high voice were most effective. Her dramatic and histrionic gifts made of her a commanding figure on the stage. The memory of a performance of this opera, heard in my thirteenth year—with Gerville-Réache, Charles Dalmorès, and Maurice Renaud—remains unmatched. Even d'Alvarez and Muratore, Matzenauer and Caruso, splendid as they were, failed to erase the earlier memory. It is curious how one appreciative of good music can at an early age, before any formulation of true artistic

values, realize the significance of a given experience.

The singers of yesterday would seem to have given us the best renditions of Dalila's arias. And though this music rightly belongs in a survey of contralto and mezzo-soprano recordings, I have decided to include it here. Gerville-Réache's Victor records of *Printemps qui commence* (disc 88244) and *Mon coeur* (disc 88184) are magnificently sung. Her later disc, made for Columbia around 1914, containing *Mon coeur* (both verses, instead of only one as in the Victor disc) and *Amour! viens aider* does not reproduce her voice as tellingly; the tonal quality is veiled.

Schumann-Heink's rendition of *Printemps* and *Mon coeur* (Victor disc 6280) are sung in German, and for this reason unappealing to me. The mastery of her singing, however, cannot be refuted. Louise Homer's versions of these arias (Victor disc 6164) evidences the best attributes of her artistry, but, in my estimation, she was neither histrionically nor temperamentally suited to the role. Her rendition of *Amour! viens aider* lacks the essential evocative fervor, although it too is well sung (Victor disc 6164). In the trio, *Je viens célébrer la victoire*, with Caruso and Journet (Victor disc 10010), there is a perfection of ensemble to which Mme. Homer contributes her share. The recordings of Maria Gay from *Samson* never appealed to me; they lacked the requisite subtlety although the singer evidenced a beauty of voice. Julia Culp was quite out of her element in the music of Dalila, and her recording of *Mon coeur* (Victor 568) suggests that Dalila was a lady of the utmost reticence. Jeanne Gordon, the American contralto, on the other hand, sang *Amour! viens aider* for Columbia in the early '20's with impressive opulence.

Onegin's Recordings

The late Sigrid Onegin did not rise to great emotional heights in her singing of either *Printemps* or *Mon coeur* (Victor disc 7320), but the natural beauty of her voice and her fine sense of style make her singing most enjoyable. Her *Amour! viens aider* (Brunswick 50076) has something of the grand manner; moreover, it has a

superbly sung *Ah, mon fils* from Meyerbeer's *Le Prophète* on the reverse face. (This is an early electrical disc.) I have always admired Karen Branzell's dark-toned voicing of *Printemps* (Brunswick 50158), and the recordings of Lucy Perelli, of the Paris Opéra-Comique, owned an appreciable emotional intensity which was not, however, supplemented with any great subtlety. Her recordings made for French H.M.V. are: *Printemps* (disc W-857), *Amour! viens aider* (disc W-1161), and *Mon coeur* (disc P-678).

Supervia in *Printemps* does not suggest a true Dalila (Parlophone 20192R), yet she manages to convey some individual subtleties which undoubtedly makes her recording appealing to her admirers. Marian Anderson's *Amour!* and *Mon coeur* sung in English (Victor disc 18008), offers an argument, as Philip Miller originally said, against the use of translations (hers are extremely clumsy ones); moreover, there is not much vitality in her singing here. Castagna's voicing of *Printemps* and *Mon coeur* (Columbia disc 71058-D) is disappointing, as Miller said, "she seems more concerned with maintaining a smooth vocal line than with expressing the subtleties of the Philistine lady's character."

The Complete Scene

Only two interpretations of the complete *Mon coeur*, as sung in the opera house, have been recorded, one by Maria Duchène and Cesar Vezzani (French H.M.V. DA-4819) and the other by Germaine Cernay and Georges Thill (Columbia 9109-M). Why Victor never released the former it is difficult to understand, for Duchène sang more opulently than Cernay. The latter, however, is an admirable musician. At one time, there was another record in the French H.M.V. catalogue containing the balance of Scene 3 sung by Duchène and Vezzani. Both d'Alvarez and Matzenauer have given superb performances of *Mon coeur* (Victor discs 6590 and 36287).

It remains to speak of Gladys Swarthout's efforts to sing *Amour! viens aider* and *Mon coeur* (Victor disc 14143). A. P. DeWeese, reviewing this disc in November, 1936, said: "*The Amour! viens aider*,

properly an invocation to love, might here just as well have been a casual order to a waiter . . . *Mon coeur*, a voluptuous love song, as here recorded (not too well at that) we find a quick race between the singer and the orchestra (the latter by all odds the best part)". I would neither add to nor take away from Mr. DeWeese's remarks.

Jacques Offenbach (1819-1880) remains, as far as this country is concerned, a composer of one opera—*The Tales of Hoffmann*. I cannot say that I enjoy the music of this opera sung in German, so I passed up the abridged version of it made by Polydor. Offenbach treated the ladies very well indeed in this score, and at the same time cleverly portrayed their characters. The Doll, in the first act, remains a musical automaton; her aria neither glorifies her nor lets her down. An early record by Pons (Decca 23016) is quite appropriately doll-like, too much so for my taste. Korjus sings the air with considerable animation, suggesting an electric doll (Victor 11921); that she voices it in German is not important. Yvonne Brothier has made perhaps the best recording of this song (H.M.V. P689), although the number suggests a recording at least ten years of age.

A Favorite Duet

The famous *Barcarolle*, between Giuletta and Niclaus, is sung in the opera by a soprano and a mezzo. Féraldy and Cernay have recorded it for French Columbia (LF122), and Brothier and Gabrielle Galland for French H.M.V. (K6059). Evidently the French believe in tradition. A freak recording is one made by Elisabeth Schumann (H.M.V. DB3641), in which she sings both parts. I cannot say I admire the Bori-Tibbett recording, but the old one by Farrar and Scotti was well done. Yet, knowing the opera, it is hard to imagine the youthful Niclaus in the voices of Tibbett or Scotti.

French Odéon about ten years ago brought out several records containing three scenes from the third act, sung by Emma Luart and M. Micheletti. There was Antonia's aria *Elle a fui*, the *Love-Duet*, and the *Final Trio*. Luart, in my estimation, is not a competent singer, and

Micheletti is no more than a routine artist. The *Love-Duet*, by Emmy Bettendorf and H. E. Groh, is impressively sung, but the German tongue just does not fit this music. Undeniably, the Germans have had an admiration for this score (after all Hoffmann was a true character—a famous German romantic writer), and one will find that German record catalogues have contained quite a few recordings from the opera at different times. Both Alda's and Bori's acoustical records of *Elle a fui* are beautifully sung.

Offenbach's *La Belle Hélène* has enjoyed considerable popularity in France. The only vocal recordings seem to be two of *Amours divins* and *Invocation à Venus*, sung by Mireille Berthon (French H.M.V. W-973) and by E. Favart (French Polydor 522081). I do not know Favart's voice, but Berthon of the Paris Opera was a capable singer.

Orpheus in Hades

Offenbach's *Orpheus in Hades* apparently had a vogue in Germany, for the German Odeon Company brought out around 1930 a set containing four 12-inch discs of an abridged version of this score. In the French record catalogues there are various excerpts from other Offenbach scores, the value of which I cannot state. Undoubtedly, Yvonne Prin-temps' singing of *Dites-lui qu'on l'a remarque* from *La Grande Duchesse de Gerolstein* (French H.M.V. P835) is worthwhile, for this singer had individuality and charm. But one of the real prizes from Offenbach is Maggie Teyte's exquisite singing of the *Couplets des aveux* from *La Périochole* (Decca 29008).

Léo Delibes (1836-1891) had a true sense of Gallic vivacity and charm; he never sought to be pretentious. If his *Lakmé* seems rather pallid today to some, it nevertheless serves to exploit a coloratura soprano; and if another Tetrizzini or Galli-Curci came along, there's no doubt the opera would attract many to hear it who have shunned it in recent years. *Lakmé* lends itself to the Italian language, and a great many of the most famous singers of this role have preferred to render it in that tongue. To my way of thinking, the music of *Lakmé* does not

wear too well on records. The French record catalogues offer many excerpts from this score which I cannot comment upon since I have not heard many of them. Exceptions are the recordings by the charming Yvonne Brothier (who has often been called a French Bori). Her *Bell Song* (H.M.V. P814) and *Pourquoi dans le grand bois* and *Sous le ciel tout étoilé* (H.M.V. W879) are well sung, but others have done the first better than she.

The *Prayer* from the first act and the *Bell Song* are sung (in Italian) with finish and style by Militza Korjus (Victor 12136); this is one of the singer's best records. The duet, *Sous le dôme épais*, has been competently voiced by Germaine Feraldy and Andrée Bernadet (Columbia 9133-M). Lily Pons' Victor recording of the *Bell Song* is preferable to her earlier one made for Parlophone (issued by Decca—23015). Although this is one of Pons' most popular roles, on records I prefer the singing of Korjus.

Tetrazzini and her Pupil

Lina Pagliughi's singing of the *Bell Song* (Parlophone E11396) is well done; it carries on the traditions of her noted teacher Tetrazzini. Of all the old recordings of this show-piece, Tetrazzini's (Victor 6340) was distinguished for the greatest élan. Galli-Curci sang it well, too, with a freshness and charm that were hers at the time of the recording (Victor 6132). Bessie Abbott's version (Victor 88084) is a valued souvenir of her artistry, but Maria Galvany's rendition (Victor 88219) is unappealing in my estimation, the whiteness of her voice in her top register being unpleasant to my ears. A recording of the duet from the first act by Emma Eames and Louise Homer (Victor 89020), although not too clearly recorded, remains admirable for the singing.

Edouard Lalo (1823-1892) has been called a pioneer of instrumental music in

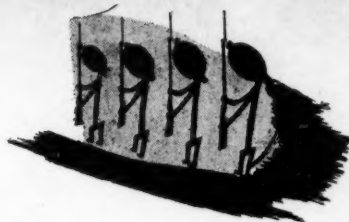
France. His *Le Roi d'Ys* has been acclaimed as his dramatic masterpiece. Outside of France, however, this opera has never taken hold. Although presented with a distinguished cast in January, 1922, at the Metropolitan Opera, it only had five performances. The duet of Rozenn and Margared from the first act, *Margared, o ma soeur*, the air of Margared, *De tous côtes*, and the air of Rozenn, *Tais - toi, Margared!*, are impressive operatic scenes, but I cannot comment on the existent recordings in the French catalogues since I have not heard them. I own a recording of the duet by Lucy Perelli and Yvonne Brothier (H.M.V. P836), which is well sung; it is now withdrawn from circulation.

Wagnerian Material

Ernest Reyer (1823-1909), because of the similarity of the story of his *Sigurd* to that of Wagner's *Siegfried*, has been called Wagnerian, but nothing is farther from the truth. He endeavored to advance French opera, but unfortunately his dramatic powers were not as great as his ideas. Both *Sigurd* and *Salammbô* have had their successes in France, and the former in recent years was consistently performed at the opéra. There is a long list of recordings from this score in the French record catalogues, but the only one with which I am familiar is the H.M.V. record made by Marjorie Lawrence of two arias, which was re-issued here by Victor (15892). The music, as Philip Miller has said, brings out all that is best in Lawrence's rich and powerful voice. But since Reyer's character is Brünnhilde, one familiar with Wagner's treatment of her may well find her Frenchified transformation in this music quite unconvincing. Certainly, the music does not rise to Wagnerian heights.

(To be continued)

FOR VICTORY BUY U. S. WAR BONDS AND STAMPS



A YEAR OF MUSIC IN THE ARMY

By Pvt. LEO GOLDSTEIN

Here is the story of one musical listener's search for music in the Army and how he found it; his experiences and contacts with other music lovers and musicians, and how the good people of Denver, Colorado, and others helped out. Pvt. Goldstein, who is now somewhere in North Africa, bails from Chicago. Ed.

It was a hot morning in June, 1942, when we were greeted at Camp Grant by the band. That was a sort of pleasant relief because I was beginning to wonder what I would be able to do about hearing some music while a member of Uncle Sam's Armed Forces. Of course, it wasn't the type of music I preferred, or was looking for, but I had to admit the snappy precision of the band and it helped to take our minds off the heat and the conjecture of what we were going to do next. As do all rookies, we found out in very short order. It was weeks before I heard anything that could be construed as real music. There were a couple of radios in the barracks but they were strictly for the "cats". One Sunday afternoon I heard strains of heaven-sent music—the Columbia Broadcasting Symphony, under the direction of Howard Barlow, was playing. I was in. So was music.

I soon made my way to camp headquarters, where I met Harold Kupper,

and erstwhile member of the violin section of the Chicago Symphony. Here, he was playing cymbals. Strange? No, because when extra percussion players were needed Harold left his fiddle for the "kitchen." Entrance into the band was closed. Even so fine a man as a horn-player, formerly with the Pittsburgh Symphony under Reiner, was denied entrance. The band was made. Our battalion contained a very fine violinist, Florian ZeBach, who was a member of WGN. I quickly made his acquaintance. The question of whether or not to bring my own violin to camp became a burning one. The arduousness of the training schedule settled that problem quickly. An award to ZeBach as "Soldier of the Week" gave him an opportunity to play over a nationwide hook-up for servicemen. A few short visits to hear him play solo and with another violinist, then my stay at Camp Grant came to a quick close since I was ordered to pack and be ready for destination unknown.

The secret was out of the bag the next morning. We were headed for Denver and the Fitzsimon's General Hospital, where we were to take up training as Technicians in the Medical Department. We arrived there on a beautiful day in August. One mile above sea-level, it was hot but not uncomfortable. The view of the hospital building itself commanded

admiration from all concerned. Here, indeed, were three months to look forward to. And now I often think back on those three months as one of the most wonderful sojourns of my army life.

There was music in abundance. Denver was a culture-minded town and its citizens took pride in their possessions. The affability of the people will long be remembered by me. Their courtesy and hospitality were exemplary for a nation at war.

George Harvey at the time was nothing but a name on a list of weekly activities for service men. Curiosity led me to his home. A superb fusion of music and congeniality made it a habit for me. In fairness, I should add, forty to fifty each week also became addicted. One hears so much of the proverbial well stocked wine cellar but this was the first time that the well stocked record library was in the cellar. Mr. Harvey had just about everything and he played just about everything in the time we had at our disposal. We started at about seven in the evening and began winding up affairs around eleven. It probably would have gone on even longer but so many of the boys had to be in for bed-check and besides my host was also human. Music I had long wanted to hear was there awaiting only to be placed on the turntable and set spinning. Requests were numerous and they included a great many works I was eager to hear, some novelties and a goodly portion of the tried and true staples. Mr. Harvey simply stacked them in his Capehart and let the music fall where it may.

Favorite Works

Bloch's powerful *Sonata*, for violin and piano, in the magnificent performance of Ysaye's pupil Joseph Gingold and Beryl Rubinstein; Teleman's *Suite for Flute and Strings*, so splendidly played by Kincaid and the Philadelphia Orchestra; a number of memorable Budapest Quartet recordings newly released at the time; the new *Madama Butterfly* set which was a repeater; Tchaikovsky's gay "Little Russian" symphony. The list could go on, but those titles suffice to give an inkling of what could happen at the Harvey's on a Sunday night.

Thursday nights we went to the Wadley's. There the atmosphere was a little different but not one wit less enjoyable. Fewer attended on account of the mid-week night. The Wadley library was in the embryo stage but through the cooperation of the Denver Public Library and a local music shop another full evening's enjoyment of recorded music was always made possible. Here, too, a fine phonograph was utilized. In fact, the biggest surprise I received occurred when we were invited to another music lover's home for a record concert and we had to be content with a less pretentious machine. It wasn't that it was inferior as a reproducing medium, but it had seemed that everybody in Denver had the other type.

Many of the men stationed in the Denver area began to acquire records, and many of them would bring their records to the Wadley's to play. Here, I heard what was missing at the Harvey's—Sibelius' symphonies.

Public Library Concerts

There were also Monday nights at the Denver Public Library, where a Carnegie set was installed. This was magnificent reproduction. There was Mr. Douglas, if I recall rightly, he of the Magnavox who had some rare vintages of the 20's and early 30's that I had missed and longed for. There was the night when we heard *The Bartered Bride* at still another home. My resistance broke down and I sent for my violin from Chicago. The Denver Public Library again came to my assistance by allowing me to borrow music. It was a grand collection with a swell variety of scores to choose from.

Mention must be made of the three record shops in town — the Charles E. Wells Music Co., the Knight-Campbell and The Record Shop. The latter was the largest and most complete. I managed to obtain a few set of records I had been looking for, such as the Casals-Thibaud version of the *Brahms Double Concerto*, the *Kreisler Quartet*—played by Kreisler and three members of the London Quartet, the *C minor Violin Sonata* by Beethoven and the Beethoven *String Trio in C minor*—played by the Pasquier brothers.

The concert life of Denver was coming

to the fore and the distribution of free tickets to servicemen enabled them to hear concerts given by Risé Stevens, Anna Kaskas, a joint concert by Larry Adler and Paul Draper, and the Denver Symphony Orchestra. The latter organization, supported by civic funds, deserves wider publicity than it has received; it should be on records. An outdoor concert at Red Rock in the foothills of the Rockies was notable for its scenic beauty as well as its music.

With the end of October all this came to a close and I found myself at Camp McCoy. It was a new camp and we were among the first arrivals. The 17th General Hospital to which I was attached was in the process of organizing a band. I played for a while with its dance group but began to long for the classics and as a consequence I soon dropped out. Clark Steigerwalt, assistant to the Chaplain, a pianist and fine accompanist, and Lt. Robert Spiro, an old acquaintance from Chicago, a baritone of distinguished qualities, and Lt. Meredith Bennett were the first musicians I came in contact with.

Playing Sonatas

Later, I was introduced to Tech. Sgt. Alfred Popper, who had a fine European background, and who prior to his induction into the army was a part of the musical life of Cleveland. Here was a fine pianist talent, and I enjoyed playing sonatas with him. Later, I met Cpl. Morton Sultan, a student of Artur Schnabel's. Other musicians were Norman Stone, a fine violinist from NBC in Chicago; Cpl. Paul Jones who formerly was Director of Chorus at the University of Wisconsin as well as an organist of note and a teacher of theory and history of music; Pvt. Ernest Eniti, violinist, who had appeared in concert with Lily Pons—a pupil of Hubay and a classmate of Robert Virovci; Cpl. Don Weidener of the Second Division, who had succeeded in welding a fine chorus; Cpl. Julian Leviton, a brilliant pianist and a native of Chicago who has appeared with success at Grant Park, and had played with Sgt. Popper in a fine series of two piano recitals; Samuel Sorin who won the Schubert Memorial in 1939 and has since appeared with the Philadelphia and N. Y.

Philharmonic Orchestras; Lt. John Kline, a powerful but expressive tenor; and Cpl. Robert Jones, a Negro tenor of high merit.

Most of these musicians have appeared in a series of concerts on Sunday afternoons known as "Enjoyment of Music" programs, credit for which must go to the energy and devotion of Cpl. Steigerwalt. These programs reached a high level at times and I am sure that all were proud of the accomplishments of these musicians who surely ranked with the best in other camps.

The story of how we acquired recorded music and its attendant record concerts is interesting.

An A.F.M.R. Set

It began, at my suggestion, with a letter to Harry Futterman's Armed Forces Master Records, Inc. Very shortly a letter was received from Columbia University promising our Service Club No. 1 a Master set of 100 records. This was soon received and was most gratefully acknowledged in the form of exceedingly well attended concerts, which became a regular Monday evening feature.

These concerts were so popular that eventually we had to repeat the programs on Wednesday night. Each week one of the leading musical lights would select the program and lead the group in a discussion of the works to be played. Funds from the Service Club receipts enabled us to add further records, while in the meantime the La Crosse Civic Choir, gave us a wonderful gift in the form of a Magnavox Symphony Model phonograph. So, err long, we had some outstanding recordings as well as a fine machine to play them on. Here are some of the works we had, and which were most popular:

Bach—*Suite No. 2* (Mengelberg); Beethoven—*Symphony No. 5* (Toscanini); Beethoven — *Waldstein Sonata* (Gieseking); Beethoven—*Leonore Overture No. 2* (Weingartner); Beethoven — *Eroica Symphony* (Bruno Walter); Beethoven—*Ninth Symphony* (Weingartner); Brahms — *Violin Concerto* (Heifetz); Brahms—*Second Symphony* (Weingartner); Debussy—*La Mer* (Koussevitzky); Dukas—

Sorcerer's Apprentice (Mitropoulos); Kern—*Show Boat Scenario* (Rodzinski); Liszt—*Mefisto Waltz* (Koussevitzky); Mozart—*Piano Concerto No. 24* (Casadesus); Prokofieff—*Peter and the Wolf* (Koussevitzky); Rachmaninoff—*First Piano Concerto* (Rachmaninoff); Schumann—*Piano Concerto* (Hess); Strauss—*Till Eulenspiegel*; Stravinsky—*Firebird Suite* (Stokowski-NBC); Tchaikovsky—*Piano Concerto* (Horowitz and Toscanini); Tchaikovsky—*Pathétique Symphony* (Furtwaengler); Wagner—*Tristan and Isolde Synthesis* (Stokowski); *Voices of the Golden Age of Opera*, Vol. I.

The repertoire of records was used up to such an extent by the time I left Camp McCoy the programs were being split up into one half recordings and the other half featuring one of our well known camp artists. These programs were under the guidance of Cpl. Leviton and bid fair to rival the other series which Cpl. Steigerwalt instituted on Sundays.

One of our last concerts I attended featured the Beethoven *Ninth Symphony*, as a tribute to Felix Weingartner. It was received with enthusiasm.

Although the percentage of men who came to these concerts was relatively small, the actual number of listeners was large enough to constitute a fine omen for the future of music when the world will be more at peace. The intelligence and understanding was, I am sure, characteristic of the American soldier at large, and America can look forward to a musical future to be proud of.

This rambling and discursive article is an attempt to give a cross-section of music in the army as one man sees it. There are other eyes and minds, and other stories. I know that one has only to pick up a general music magazine to find out what goes on in the musical minds of Young America in the Army. It is encouraging, to say the least.

CONTEMPORARY COMPOSER-PIANISTS

By Kenneth Hieber

PART II

Reynaldo Hahn, a Venezuelan by birth, but a Frenchman by training, is an all-round musician, for he has composed a great deal of music, sung, conducted (including Mozart at Salzburg), and played piano. On records he has appeared as conductor, singer, and accompanist. Ninon Vallin has recorded ten of Hahn's songs with the composer at the piano (Decca 20504-8). The first record contains Hahn's two best known songs, *L'Heure exquise* and *Si mes vers avaient des ailes*. Hahn has also accompanied for the baritone, Arthur Endreze, in recordings of *L'Enamourée* and *Phyllis* (Pathé). Hahn's songs are the best known part of his writing, at least in America; and more than one

is a favorite of many singers. In France, he has been quite successful as a composer of operettas. Excerpts from *O mon bel Inconnu* have been recorded for Pathé, with Hahn singing one of the leading roles.

Zoltan Kodaly and Bela Bartok are the two outstanding Hungarian composers of the present day. Both men have interested themselves in Hungarian and Balkan folk music; they have collected folk tunes from the peasantry either by direct notation or with the aid of a field recording machine. The influence of this work in folk lore is to be found in the original writings of both men. In addition, both Bartok and Kodaly have made concert settings of folk songs.

Bartok has made a large number of

records of his own works, in addition to playing the piano accompaniments for some songs of Kodaly (some fourteen H.M.V. records). For His Master's Voice, Bartok recorded several of his piano pieces; the *Allegro Barbaro*, the *Bear Dance*, a *Bagatelle*, a *Roumanian Dance*, and the *Suite—Opus 14*. Little of Bartok's piano music has been played much, but the *Allegro Barbaro* and the *Bear Dance* are heard occasionally. Most of his piano writing is angular and exploits the percussive elements of the instrument. Bartok has written 153 pieces for children entitled *Mikrokosmos*. This collection of pieces is intended as teaching material for young students. The pieces are written in the same style as Bartok's more difficult piano works, but each little work deals with a specific technical or rhythmic problem. Undoubtedly the pieces have a teaching value, especially as an introduction to contemporary music; but their value as absolute music to the listener is questionable, for they are likely to seem quite dull if heard without the printed page in front of one. Bartok has recorded a group from the *Mikrokosmos* (Columbia set M-455); the album is labeled "volume one," so it may be assumed that eventually one or more volumes will follow. Two of the pieces from *Mikrokosmos* are also included as Bartok's representation in Columbia's *History of Music*, Vol. 5.

There is a recent album of piano pieces played by Bartok published by Continental. One side of the four-record set consists of duets played with Mrs. Bartok. A review of this set will be found in the March, 1943, issue of this magazine.

It cannot truthfully be said that Bartok's piano solos represent the best facets of his writing. One must turn to the chamber music for the less angular and hammering qualities of his music. The string quartets in particular (the first two have been recorded) will repay investigation by any intelligent listener who will approach them free from prejudices, particularly if the listener has been subjected to works like the *Concerto* for two pianos and percussion. The chamber music of Bartok shows an alive contemporary mind which can create music of real consequence.

Bartok has long had an outspoken admiration for his fellow countryman Joseph Szigeti the violinist. This admiration has been responsible for several of Bartok's compositions for violin. Among them is the *Rhapsody No. 1*, for violin and piano, which Szigeti and the composer have recorded (Columbia disc 11410D). This work shows the influence of Bartok's interest in folk music, suggesting as it does dance tunes. The *Rhapsody* is not unlike the two sets of folk dances that Szigeti and Bartok have also recorded; the *Roumanian Folk Dances* (arranged for violin and piano by Szekely) (Columbia disc 17089D), and the *Seven Hungarian Folk Songs* (arranged by Szigeti) (Columbia record 7247M). These settings are the most attractive part of Bartok's output to the listener who does not have a passionate love for the contemporary idiom, and at least one of the records belongs in any collection as a representation of folk-song settings for concert use. In 1938 Bartok



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composed his *Contrasts*, for violin, clarinet, and piano, especially for Szigeti and Benny Goodman. Here one finds the Bartok of the quartets writing music that is at once cerebral and expressive. The brilliant performance by Bartok, Szigeti, and Goodman will stand as the definitive one for all time, and the recording is all one could ask for (Columbia Set 178).

Ernst von Dohnanyi is a contemporary Hungarian who has written considerable music, none of it strikingly modern, but rather continuing the course of the late 19th-century composers—Brahms in particular. Most of his music is enjoyable, and all of it shows a solid technical background as well as a definite personality. Dohnanyi's first successes were two-fold, for he is an excellent pianist as well as a composer, and in later years he has conducted the Budapest Philharmonic Orchestra.

Dohnanyi has recorded as pianist in his *Variations on a Nursery Tune* for piano and orchestra. The work is based on the children's song *Ab vous dirai-je, Maman*, a tune also used by Mozart for a set of piano variations which were later adapted for use by coloratura sopranos. This is one of the finest pieces of musical tomfoolery in the concert repertory. Surely Dohnanyi could not have written the work with any other idea in mind than to poke fun at the music of his contemporaries and near-contemporaries. The piece begins with a long orchestral introduction which might be termed the "Prelude to the Fifth Opera of the 'Ring.'" Then after a thunderous climax, the piano enters with the simple theme played unadorned except for a graceful embellishment of the melodic line. Then through a series of brilliant variations Dohnanyi takes a number of composers for a ride, each in their turn—Brahms, Ravel of *La Valse*, and even Percy Grainger. But let the enterprising listener supply his own names; the wider one's knowledge, the more the fun. Even the bi-tonalists are taken in too, with the argument near the end about the key between the piano and winds. The recording of the work (now a decade old) stands up fairly well, but the balance is not always as well maintained as it might be. This would surely

be the perfect vehicle for Sanroma and the Boston "Pops" Orchestra. Dohnanyi is assisted in the recording by the London Symphony Orchestra conducted by Lawrence Collingwood (Victor set 162). He has also recorded two of his shorter piano pieces for His Master's Voice: the *March Indulo*, and the *Pastorale*.

Ernst Krenek is in his recent writings an uncompromising advocate of the twelve-tone technique. He has recorded eleven of the twelve *Short Piano Pieces* which make up his Opus 83 (Columbia set X-171). These pieces were written in 1938 as an attempt to provide the piano student with some modern music within his playing capabilities. Each little piece has a descriptive title, intended no doubt to stimulate the mind of the young musician. There is ample material in the pieces for diligent study, as various technical devices are used, and the student will benefit from carefully analyzing the music. But as absolute music, they are completely uninteresting to me, for, like most of Krenek's music, they lack emotion. The composer is a capable enough pianist, and the recording is good.

Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco is a contemporary Italian composer whose writings are conservative and somewhat imitative. At the present time he is living in the United States. Castelnuovo-Tedesco is an excellent pianist. There is a Victor record by the composer of his *Cipressi* (with the subtitle "Remembering the Cypresses of Usigliano di Sari") (disc 16449). This is a work clearly showing Debussian influences. Nevertheless, it is sufficiently virile and individual to hold its own. Castelnuovo-Tedesco has also recorded his Viennese Rhapsody *Alt-Wien* for Polydor. This is a work in three sections: *Alt-Wien*, a waltz; *Nocturne*; and *Memento mori*, subtitled *Fox-trot tragico*. The first section has been heard often in a violin transcription made popular by Heifetz. The odd side of the two records contains *Sea-Murmurs*. Castelnuovo-Tedesco's piano compositions deserve an occasional airing, but it is in his song cycles and overtures to Shakespearean plays that he has shown most originality.

(To be continued)

The American Music Lover



RECORD NOTES AND REVIEWS

It is the purpose of this department to review monthly all worthwhile recordings. If at any time we happen to omit a record in which the readers is particularly interested, we shall be glad to give our opinion of the recording on written request. Correspondents are requested to enclose self-addressed stamped envelopes.

We believe that record buyers would do well to order by title rather than by number such items as they may wish to purchase. Numbers are sometimes printed incorrectly in our sources.

All prices given are without tax.

The lateness of the magazine is occasioned by the fact that we did not receive the last of the recordings for review this month until the ninth. Add too weeks for time required by the printer and the reader will understand how it is utterly impossible for us to mail earlier.

Orchestra

BEETHOVEN: *Symphony in C major* (Jena); played by the Janssen Symphony of Los Angeles, conducted by Werner Janssen. Victor set DM-946, three discs, price \$3.50.

▲ Although this set has not arrived at the time of writing, some discussion of the music itself may not be amiss. Weissmann and an unidentified orchestra recorded this work for Parlophone around 1929; Decca re-pressed the recording here several years ago. When I first heard the Weissmann performance I felt that those who discovered the parts at the University of Jena in 1909 were ill-advised to publish it. I have always thought that Beethoven if he was indeed composer of it, would have repudiated the work had he lived. Dr. Hugo Riemann seems to have thought the symphony was probably genuine, though an early work, and this was all that was needed to bring it to the public's attention. It is claimed that Beethoven wrote it about 1790, which would be ten years before his recognized *First Symphony in C major*. No sketch books of the composer exist showing themes or ideals relevant to the work. Some writers suggest that his grandfather Louis Beethoven wrote it, which would account for the inscription on the manuscript parts.

Practically none of the writers on Beethoven refer to the work; their silence is more revealing than any comments they might make.

The work is not exactly dull, although it is conventional. There are some character-

istics in the score which suggest Beethoven as its creator—harmonic devices in the second movement and some woodwind figures in the last. But might not Beethoven have got such ideas from his grandfather Louis? Almost any competent late 18th-century composer could have written this work. Stylistically it stems from Haydn, which is not surprising since Haydn was a symphonic figure with which to reckon in those times. The other recording of the *Jena Symphony* was never something I wished to have in my own library; whether or not the present recording will alter that feeling remains to be seen.

—P. H. R.

DAI-KEONG LEE: *Prelude and Hula*; played by the National Symphony Orchestra, direction of Hans Kindler. Victor disc 11-8452, price \$1.00.

▲ A young Hawaiian composer, educated in the United States and now serving in the Army, glorifies a famous dance pattern of his country. The intrinsic value of this music may be debatable, but we suspect it will appeal to a great many record buyers. The design is of no great consequence, but the composer knows how to obtain atmospheric qualities. The *Hula* section bears little relation to the popular tunes that have been turned out in copious quantities for years. What the composer does here, dozens of European composers have been doing for years. Supply a Dvorak *Slavonic Dance* with an opening prelude and you have the same formula. Golestan, the Roumanian, and others have taken a folk dance pattern, supplied it with a prelude or similar form of introduction and turned it loose on the market. Strangely, the atmospheric qualities of the music recall Delius and Ravel; the latter's *Daphnis et Chloé*, for example. The orchestration is rich and sonorous and the whole thing devised with an idea to appeal to those who like tonal coloring and exotic rhythms. How enduring the appeal of the music will be remains a personal matter. Ardent addicts to the classicists who like music calculated to appeal to a sense of design will undoubtedly find that the lush sonorities and atmospheric qualities of this work hold little or no endur-

ing attraction. Other who do not demand conventional forms in music will probably find the persuasiveness of this music more permanent.

One suspects that Hans Kindler enjoys playing this music, for he stresses its sonorities and indulges in some emotional heavings, which suggest a careful study of the score. Whether or not the *rubati* employed by the conductor in the *Hula* are indicated in the score we cannot say, but we believe the music would have fared better without them. The recording is good, and the surfaces we heard among the best obtainable today.

—P. G.

TELEMANN: *Don Quichotte Suite* (Overture for String Orchestra and Harpsichord); played by Arthur Fiedler's Sinfonietta with Edwin Bodly at the harpsichord, direction of Arthur Fiedler. Victor set DM-945, two discs, price \$2.50.

▲ History has not treated Telemann too kindly. A contemporary of Bach, Handel and Rameau, he seems to have enjoyed considerable success in his time. As a composer he was extremely prolific but given to writing too quickly and with insufficient self-criticism. Hence his style, although popularly effective, tended to be superficial. Nevertheless he wrote a number of works that are worth reviving. The *Suite in A minor*, for flute and orchestra, recently recorded by Kincaid and Ormandy, would seem to be a case in point. The present work may be regarded by many as another. It is an interesting example of early program music; interesting because although the program remains understandable one can enjoy the music without recourse to its literary connotations. There is humor and sparkle in this music, but of an external order. It is a far cry from Strauss' dramatic realism. This is a sort of *suite intime* probably written for some social function. There are eight sections to the score: 1. Overture—quite evidently a parody on the spirit and intentions of the Don; 2. The Don's Awakening; 3. The Don's Attack on the Windmills; 4. The Love Sighs of Princess Aline; 5. The Tossing in the Blanket of Sancho Panza; 6. The Gallop of the Don's horse,

Rosinante; 7. The Gallop of Sancho Panza's Donkey; 8 Don Quichotte's Repose. Telemann's treatment of the last section is quite different from Strauss' noble ending of his tone poem; evidently Telemann felt humor was the keynote of the whole of *Don Quichotte* (he does not seem to have thought of the tale in terms of a satire) and so the restlessness of the Don is evidenced in "repose."

The adjective "charm" is attached to so much music of the 18th century that one comes to expect its intrusion in every review of music of that period. There is really nothing captivating or alluring about this score; its vivacity and humor are engaging in a purely superficial manner. One suspects if it were less well played (for Fiedler does everything he can to vitalize the score) it would not appeal too strongly. But Fiedler has given us a good account of this music, one that should lend

delight to the performance in repetition for many.

The recording is good, although on high-fidelity equipment the violins tend to tonal sharpness. The surfaces on the set we heard were good.

—P. H. R.

WEBER: *Concertstueck in F minor, Opus 79*; played by Robert Casadesus and symphony Orchestra conducted by Eugène Bigot. Columbia set X or MX-59, two discs, price \$2.50.

▲ This set, which Columbia recalls attention this month, was first released in April, 1936. Time has not diminished the value of the recording, nor has it brought forth another performance to compete with or efface the present one. The few times that we have had the urge to rehear this music in recent years have found us completely in agreement with Philip Miller's original review of the performance. It is,

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said Mr. Miller, "a splendidly achieved success. Robert Casadesu . . . is at his best in this music. His playing has clarity and vitality, which are the very essentials in the interpretation of music such as this. The orchestra, though unnamed, is an excellent one under the direction of the capable Eugène Bigot."

There may be those who decry the operatic characteristics of this score and refuse to recognize it as a piano concerto, yet, despite its program, it can hardly be regarded as anything else. One should read Tovey on this subject (*Essays in Musical Analysis*, Vol. IV, page 61). To be sure, he does not include it in his volume of concertos, but he points out that it "is the origin of the post-classical concerto form established by Mendelssohn and followed by Saint-Saëns, and by Max Bruch in his best-known violin concertos. No composer since 1850 would deny the full title of concerto to a work of this range."

Mr. Miller stated in April, 1936, that it was "an occasion for rejoicing that Columbia has seen fit to bring us the *Concertstueck*". Undoubtedly, a number of musical listeners who have never procured the set previously will find cause for rejoicing that Columbia has called attention to it again.

Since there were no notes included in the album sent us, we reprint the program here: "The Chatelaine sits all alone on her balcony gazing far away into the distance. Her Knight has gone to the Holy Land. Years have passed by, battles have been fought. Is he still alive? Will she ever see him again? A fearful vision rises to her mind—her knight is lying on the battle-field deserted and alone; he is wounded and bleeding fatally. If only she could be by his side; if she could but die with him. She falls back unconscious. But hark! What sounds are those in the distance? What are those flashes in the wood? Knights and squires with the cross of the Crusaders, banners waving, acclamations of the people. And there—it is he who rides triumphant. She sinks into his arms. Her love is triumphant and her happiness without end. The very woods and waves sing the song of her happiness; a thousand voices proclaim its victory."

September, 1943

William Saunders in his book on Weber says "the musical treatment of this somewhat tandy novelette is one of the greatest achievements that Weber ever effected. . . the finale of the *Concertstueck* is one of the greatest things in music." Tovey writes: "the nearest classical parallel to the mood, as well as the 'programme,' of his finale is the finale of Beethoven's *Lebewohl* Sonata."

—P. H. R.

Keyboard

BEETHOVEN: *Sonata in C sharp minor, Opus 27, No. 2 (Moonlight)*; played by Rudolf Serkin. Columbia set X or MX-237, two discs, price \$2.50.

▲ Nicknames have helped the popularity of many works, and hindered others. Certainly the romantic nonsense built around the present sonata has retarded more than one listener's enjoyment of the music in a performance of which Beethoven would have given his approval. The late Paderewski was completely in sympathy with the poet Rellstab, who gave the sonata its sobriquet. Moreover, the noted Pole was not disinclined to accept the first movement as a lament for unrequited love. This because Beethoven dedicated the work to the Countess Giulietta Guicciardi, for whom he had a tender feeling. But Beethoven did not compose the sonata for the Countess, even though he dedicated it to her. He originally gave her a rondo, but later wishing to inscribe it to another pupil, he requested its return and by way of exchange sent her the present sonata. A great deal too much ink has been spent on whether or not Beethoven was inspired to write this work by unrequited love, by a poem describing a maiden kneeling at the high altar in prayer for the recovery of a sick father, or by a moonlit scene. Most people are unaware that Beethoven did not particularly care for this sonata, and he said so on more than one occasion. To Czerny he is quoted as saying: "Everybody is always talking about the *C sharp minor Sonata*! Surely, I have written better things. There is the *F sharp*

minor Sonata—that is something very different."

It is because the pianist's approach to this music is often determined by the acceptance or dismissal of the dedication and all the other nonsense, that we have prefaced our review with the above paragraph. Paderewski played it in his heyday in the romantic manner; Petri, on the other hand, treats the work as though it were purely classical. I must admit to a great admiration for Petri's reading: the uniformity of his playing in the first movement conveys no rigidity to me. I suspect he, like his noted teacher Busoni, shuns any romantic feeling. It is a pity that Bachaus' performance is not better recorded for he gives an all-around satisfactory reading. Of all the performances of the "Moonlight" that have come to my attention in the past fifteen years, these two are the only ones I have desired to keep. What about Schnabel? Someone will ask. I was not too greatly impressed by his interpretation, and so I passed it up when it came out. I have never been convinced that Schnabel was the ideal performer for the Beethoven sonatas. The Society would have done better to have engaged a number of pianists for the job, just as they engaged a number of singers to render the Wolf songs. I own several of the Beethoven Sonata Society sets, but not the one housing the "Moonlight." As I recall it, it was no better recorded than the Bachaus' set. A recent set by Moiseiwitsch (issued in England), although splendidly recorded, did not appeal to me either, since the pianist tended to poetize more than I like.

It has taken a little time to reach Mr. Serkin. By this time the reader has probably realized that I do not view another "Moonlight" too favorably and that I am not greatly impressed with Mr. Serkin's performance. The slow tempo he adopts for the first movement depressed me; I had never thought of it as funeral music before and I could not rid myself of the feeling as I listened. The melody does not stand out as it does in the Petri and Bachaus performances, and as the music soars there is none of the brightness that is required to relieve monotony. Both

Petri and Bachaus bring more buoyancy to the second movement. To my way of thinking, Serkin fares best in the finale, but even here he does not efface the memory of the others. I find his performance lacking in imagination; it tends to be letter-perfect without any individual qualities to distinguish it. One can, however, no more condemn his playing whole-heartedly than praise it. Undeniably, he is an accomplished executant.

The recording is good, but the surfaces on the discs I played were very aggressive.

It would be my recommendation to those who wish to purchase at this late day a set of the "Moonlight" to listen to Mr. Serkin, then to listen to Messrs. Petri and Bachaus. The qualities one man appreciates another may despise. Personally, I shall keep my Petri and Bachaus sets.

—P. H. R.

MULET: *Toccata (Thou Art the Rock)*; and VIERNE: *Scherzo* from *Symphony No. 2 for Organ*; played by Virgil Fox on the Organ in the Chapel of Girard College, Philadelphia. Victor disc 11-8467, price \$1.00.

▲ The *Toccata* by Henry Mulet, French organist (born 1878), shows the influence of the impressionist school; it is a pre-tentious piece with an cumulative crescendo. Vierne's *Scherzo* is lighter stuff stemming from the music of Widor and St. Saëns, under whom he studied. It has long been a highly popular piece with organists.

There is abundant brilliance in both recordings and considerable sonority. Also there is considerable diffusion of tone, which may or may not be due to the organist or to the acoustics of the Girard College Chapel. We have heard that the acoustics of the Chapel are admirable, but we'll bet they are at their best when the Chapel is filled. The recording of the *Scherzo* by Grover J. Oberle (issued by Tone-Art in April, 1941) was less diffuse, although the level of the recording was decidedly below par. An engineer friend of ours contends that what we note as

diffusion is in reality distortion in the recording.

In the Mulet piece the reproduction is tremendous, but the sonority of the tone lacks a certain richness that is usually heard from modern church organs.

Virgil Fox plays both pieces in a showy manner; his is more of a display of technical virtuosity than feeling. —P. G.

Voice

Don Cossacks on the Attack (two folk songs); *Kuban River, Snowflakes, Platoff's Song* (three Cossack songs) (disc 7399-M); *On the Black Horse* (Zaharoff—arr. Jaroff's), *Caucasian Mountains, Along the Street* (two soldier songs) (disc 7400-M); *Sailor's Song, In the Village* (folksongs); *Lezginska* (Caucasian song) (disc 7401-M); *The Recruit's Last Day* (folksong), *Song of the Plains* (Knipper) (disc 7402-M); sung by the Don Cossack Chorus, Serge Jaroff, conductor. Columbia set M542, four discs, price \$4.50.

▲ The Don Cossack Chorus has been appearing for a number of weeks at the Radio City Music Hall in New York with enormous success. Aided by effective staging the singing of this precision group has emerged as much of an attractive as most of the pictures shown during its engagement. One realizes in hearing this chorus in person that its ensemble training has not obliterated the individuality of its members. Indeed, it is the preservation of each member's individuality that result in the nuanced tonal effects of the organization. It will be admitted that more of this is obtained in the baritone and bass sections than in the tenor. I personally do not like some of the falsetto singing. Two qualities, however, distinguish the chorus' work: its vitality and its ability to convey feeling.

Most of the material in this album is animated, showy—the sort of boisterousness and rowdiness one expects from an army group. Most are, in fact, songs of the army. Although some of the songs my

be sung by the brave peoples of fighting Russia today, it is doubtful whether they all are. The Don Cossacks fought in the White Army of the Crimea and with the defeat of the Czarism regime, they were exiled from Russia. They still sing some of the White Army Songs! Selections might not lend the material sufficient variety for some in a single hearing; however, the fact that the words of the songs are given in the album cover should help maintain the listener's interest. If I were asked to select one disc from the set, I think I would be inclined to take the third, with the rowdy *Sailor's Song* and the highly effective *Lezginska* with its organ-like bass effects.

The recording is excellently realized, but the surfaces of the discs I heard were not too smooth.

—P. H. R.

BEACH: *Ab, Love, But a Day*, and BRAHE: *Bless This Home*; sung by Gladys Swarthout (mezzo-soprano) with Lester Hodges at the piano. Victor 10-inch disc 10-1050, price 75c.

▲ Miss Swarthout sings the sentimental *Bless This Home* better in our estimation than she does Mrs. Beach's song. In the

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WANTED: *Otello* — *Esultate* and *Andrea Chenier* arias by Zanelli. Robert Harper, 4455 St. Clair Ave., No. Hollywood, California.

WANTED: Schumann—*Etudes Symphoniques* played by Alfred Cortot and Tchaikowsky — *Quartet No. 2 in F major*, Op. 22 played by Budapest Quartet. Box 14. Amer. Music Lover.

latter, she tends to be sad for no reason and to scoop too much, and her diction is by no means as clear as in the other song. *Ab, Love, But a Day* fares better with a higher voice; it needs the brightness and vibrancy that the musical line suggests. It is said that Miss Swarthout recorded these songs in response to requests from radio listeners and concert admirers.

The recording does better by the singer than it does by the pianist. The tone of the keyboard instrument inclines to be wiry and not mellow. This, of course, may be entirely due to the instrument that was used.

—P. G.

MOZART: *Don Giovanni*—*Or sai chi l'onore*, Act I, and *Non mi dir, bell'idol mio*, Act II; sung by Rose Bampton (soprano) with the Victor Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Wilfred Pelletier. Victor disc 11-8466, price \$1.00.

▲ One admires almost everything that Rose Bampton essays on records, for her musicianship is always admirable. Miss Bampton has not, however, been too well advised in her assumption of certain roles in the opera house; she seems especially unsuited, vocally and temperamentally, to the parts of Alceste and Donna Anna. It is not fine musicianship alone that makes a singer convincing in a part; histrionically and emotionally also she must be persuasive. Donna Anna is a strongly passionate creature, and her anger in the *Vengeance Aria* is quite as fervent as Isolde's is in the famous *Narrative* from the first act of *Tristan and Isolde*. Only a truly sensuous voice can do full justice to the part of Donna Anna. Hers is music written in the grand manner, requiring fire and sweep and majesty; this is particularly true in the *Or sai chi l'onore*. Anyone familiar with Frieda Leider's recording of this aria knows exactly what I mean; her singing thrills one, while Bampton's leaves one only in admiration of her musicianly efforts. In striving to command the sweep and intensity of Donna Anna's ire, Miss Bampton becomes strident, and one is always conscious of the difficulty of the aria's tessitura.

In *Non mi dir*, Miss Bampton fares better; the music is more lyrical and this

permits her to use more sweetness of tone. Her singing in the *Larghetto* section is estimable, but in the *Allegretto* section she again makes us conscious of the difficulty of the vocal line. She hardly qualifies as a true dramatic coloratura, which is the type of voice Mozart wrote the part for. *Non mi dir* is another great operatic scene, like *Dove sono* of which Mr. Grew wrote last month.

In the *Or sai* Miss Bampton does most of the recitative preceding the aria and has wisely had the tenor Hardesty Johnson sing the responses of Don Octavio.

Pelletier gives the singer fine orchestral support, and the recording is realistically achieved. Since the worthwhile recording of the *Vengeance Aria* by Margarete Baumer (Decca 20069) has been removed from the catalogue, this is the only individual disc, outside of the complete opera set, of either air.

—P. H. R.

A SONG PROGRAM: *Miranda* (Hageman) and *Serenade* (Carpenter) (disc 10-1051); *A Ballynure Ballad* (arr. Hughes), *The Low Backed Car* (Lover), *The Little Irish Girl* (Lohr), and *Kitty Me Love, Will You Marry Me* (disc 10-1052); *Mah Lindy Lou* (Strickland) and *Witness* (Negro Spiritual) (disc 10-1053); sung by James Melton (tenor) with Robert Hill at the piano. Victor set (10-inch) M-947, price \$3.50.

▲ Jimmy Melton, now a member of the Metropolitan Opera Company, began his career in radio. His singing is characteristically American, it is straightforward, manly and buoyant. One feels he sings because he likes to sing, and one suspects he is happiest in music that permits him to be cheerful. Those who seek for subtlety will not find this quality one of his long suits. Thus his treatment of Carpenter's *Serenade* does not evidence the feeling for poetic nuance that Gladys Swarthout seeks to bring to her rendition of it. And his singing of the four Irish songs hasn't the expressive wiles once employed by McCormack; but Melton sings these songs with admirable directness and evident relish, a great deal better than most singers who essay them these days.

Looking over the program at first, we

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were inclined to the view that all would have been well if Melton had left out the ubiquitous *Mah Lindy Lou*. But after hearing him sing this song we changed our mind completely; for he sings this sort of thing exceptionally well and without sentimental stress. Melton's diction is admirable throughout. There is more than a suggestion that he learned much regarding diction and tonal effects from McCormack. There is perhaps more wisdom in the singer's choice of a program than meets the eye or ear at first; these are undoubtedly the sort of songs he has sung with success on the radio, and unquestionably the type of songs his radio admirers, to say nothing of others, would wish him to perpetuate.

The recording is favorable to the singer's voice and the balance between voice and piano is equitable. Robert Hill, in his piano playing, matches the singer's style. —P. G.

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▲ Queena Mario teaches at the Juilliard School of Music. Originally a pupil of Marcella Sembrich, Miss Mario may be said to have a fine tradition behind her. She tells us that the idea for this course of instruction in voice technique first occurred to her when she was teaching at the Curtis Institute in Philadelphia. This was some years ago after the singer's retirement from the Metropolitan Opera. She states further that "it was there that I realized how valuable it was for the student to hear a vocal passage sung correctly, then to imitate it."

Now singing is by no means an imi-

tative art, and the majority of pupils require personal instruction under a good teacher to realize the best. Singing is so much a matter of feeling, rather than hearing, that there is always the danger of the pupil trying to make his or her voice the exact counterpart in timbre of the person he or she imitates. How many voices have been ruined by trying to imitate Caruso or McCormack, Melba or Galli-Curci, we'll never know. It is a moot question whether an untrained pupil can iron out for himself the natural faults in his voice.

It may well be that many will profit from the use of such records as these. I have not heard any of the records, nor have I seen any of the printed lessons of instruction that accompany them, but the latter would seem, according to the information given me, quite comprehensive. The integrity of Miss Mario is above question; but one wonders whether her ideas conveyed in this manner will serve a pupil as advantageously as she thinks they will. The courses are intended to carry the student through a year and a half to two years of technical study. If the student adheres to the course as laid out by Miss Mario, and does not strive to progress further until he or she has realized the earlier intentions of the course, there are just reasons to believe that the student will profit by it.

Undoubtedly, the courses will supplement the work of accomplished teachers. As to the quality of the records, the recording, and the various voices which Miss Mario has chosen to illustrate her points, I cannot offer any comment.

I cannot refrain from quoting the comments of Maestro Vincenzo Sabatini, under whom I studied at one time. Someone criticized McCormack, who was one of Sabatini's most famous pupils, for not imitating the timbre of certain famous Italian tenors of his time. Sabatini said: "Each singer is individual; that is why a singer should never imitate another no matter how perfect his artistry may seem." But the views of one teacher are not necessarily those of another. Many teachers illustrate tone for their pupils, but being present at the lesson they can immediately